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NORTH CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL COMMISSION

1050 NORTHGATE DRIVE, SUITE 130  
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA 94903 - (415) 472-4321

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June 28, 1978

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MEMORANDUM

*electric power - plants -*  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
C-117

TO: Commissioners and Interested Members of the Public

*Coastal zone report -*

FROM: Robert Brown, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Power Plant Siting Report and Recommendations

The State Coastal Commission has just released its final staff report and recommendations on coastal power plant siting. The report designates areas which are not suitable for siting new power plants or related facilities. Two public hearings on the report will be held before the State Coastal Commission, one in northern and one in southern California. The northern California hearing is scheduled for:

DATE: July 5, 1978

TIME: No specific time has been set. The hearing is #10 on an agenda of 11 items and will probably be held in the mid-afternoon.

PLACE: Airport Marina Hotel

1380 Old Bayshore Highway

Burlingame (south of San Francisco International Airport)

Background

The report was prepared in response to Section 30413(b) of the Coastal Act which requires the Coastal Commission to designate specific areas of the coastal zone where construction of an electric power plant would be inconsistent with the objectives of the Coastal Act of 1976. In making its designations, the Coastal Commission is to allow a sufficient number of sites for power plant development or expansion to meet the state's need for electric power.

A draft report and preliminary recommendations on siting were prepared by the state Commission staff in December 1977 and public hearings were conducted at the regional level during the spring. The final report



incorporates many of the comments received from the regional commissions and from the public during this time. A summary of the state staff's final report, dated June 20, 1978, is attached. The final report's specific recommendations for the North Central Region's Coastal Zone are summarized below.

Specific Recommendations

1. Northern Sonoma, Gualala to Russian River. Areas recommended for designation (ie, not suitable for power plants) include the land on the ocean side of Highway 1 north of Black Point and areas south of the Sea Ranch which are in public ownership or which are proposed for public acquisition for additions to existing State Parks.
2. Southern Sonoma, Russian River to Tomales Bay. From the Russian River to Bodega Head, recommended designations include Forestry Special Treatment Areas, wetlands, some public beaches, and Bodega Harbor. Shoreline areas north of Salmon Creek and south of Bodega Head are not recommended for designation. South of the town of Bodega, the Estero Americano and Estero de San Antonio have been recommended for designation.
3. Northern Marin County, Tomales Bay. The entire coastal zone bordering Tomales Bay has been recommended for designation, including an area which extends several miles inland on the eastern side.
4. Point Reyes Peninsula and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. No recommendations are made by the State Commission staff for areas exclusively owned or controlled by the federal government. However, in order to protect the recreational and scenic resources of these areas, designations are recommended for any coastal zone land not federally controlled, such as Bolinas or in-holdings within the GGNRA or the Seashore.
5. San Francisco. Except for Fleishacker Zoo, the Olympic Golf Club, and Lake Merced, the coastal zone in San Francisco County has not been designated. (Urban areas in the county's coastal zone are clearly unrealistic sites for new power plants.)

A copy of the complete report and maps identifying significant resources are available for review at the Commission offices.



Differences between the State Recommendations and the Regional Commission's recommendations

Following a public hearing on February 23, 1978, the North Central Coast Regional Commission adopted a recommendation that the future siting of power plants within any part of the coastal zone of Marin and Sonoma counties would be inconsistent with the objectives of the Coastal Act and that the entire area therefore should be designated as unsuitable. This finding was based upon potential threats to the region's recreational, scenic and natural resources, the potential adverse impacts upon agricultural and timber economies, and the lack of adequate roads and public services to support a major construction force.

These findings and regional Commission recommendations are not incorporated in the state's final recommendations. No additional areas were designated as inappropriate for power plants after the preliminary December 1977 report and in some cases, these original designations were removed; most notably areas located between the coast and Highway 1. The June 20th final state staff report would conclude that approximately 50 percent of Marin and Sonoma County's coastal zone is appropriate for the siting of new power plants.

The North Central Coast Regional Commission will not be conducting additional hearings on this subject. Written and verbal testimony should be directed to the State Coastal Commission. Written comments can be mailed to 631 Howard Street, San Francisco, 94105. Verbal testimony will be received at the July 6th hearing. The staff of the Regional Commission is however, ready to answer questions and to assist in the interpretation of the final report. Please call Lasta Tomasevich, (415) 472-4321 for additional information.





June 20, 1978

FROM: Staff of State California Coastal Commission

SUBJECT: SUMMARY to report entitled "Final staff recommendation on the designation of Coastal Zone areas where construction of an Electric Power Plant would prevent achievement of the objectives of the California Coastal Act of 1976"

Staff recommends designation of specific oceanfront areas as sites where construction of power plants would be inconsistent with the objectives of the California Coastal Act of 1976.

Section 30413 of the Coastal Act requires the Commission to provide sufficient coastal sites to meet California's need for electric power while assuring that power plants are not built in the State's most environmentally important coastal areas.

In designated areas the State Energy Commission cannot approve construction of power plant facilities without Coastal Commission approval. In non-designated areas no Coastal Commission approval is needed for the construction of such facilities.

The Energy Commission's 1977 Biennial Report indicates that during the next 20 years the electric utility companies plan one expansion of an existing coastal site and no new sites. Nevertheless, the recommended designations leave open the option of siting new power plants on the coast with ocean water available for cooling.

Under the staff recommendations:

—Power plants would not be allowed in six coastal areas totalling 260 miles of shoreline. These include the Big Sur Coast, the Lost Coast in southern Humboldt and northern Mendocino Counties, the central Mendocino County coast, the Eel River Delta in Humboldt County, the southern San Mateo-northern Santa Cruz County coast, and Point Conception in Santa Barbara County.

—No designations constraining power plant construction are recommended for another 270 miles of shoreline. These include 140 miles under State jurisdiction and 130 miles under Federal jurisdiction. No Coastal Commission approval would be needed to construct power plants in these areas.

—Sufficient areas adjacent to each of the 18 existing power plant sites in the coastal zone are left open for reasonable expansion of the existing facilities. Although these 18 sites at present occupy only five miles of shoreline, they represent approximately 60 percent of California's current electricity generating capacity.

—Along the remaining 570 miles of coastline, specific resources are recommended for designation, including State beaches and parks, other areas of high recreational value, and the State's most valuable coastal wetlands and wildlife habitat areas. These resources are interspersed with areas not recommended for designation.

Along these 570 miles of coast, major power plants facilities may be constructed without Coastal Commission approval in areas not recommended for designation. But, Commission approval would be needed if any ancillary facilities,



such as cooling water conduits or transmission lines, are proposed for construction in adjacent designated coastal resource areas. An electric utility could obtain a Commission decision on such ancillary facilities prior to submitting a proposed coastal site to the Energy Commission; or, such approval could be sought concurrently with Energy Commission review of the entire project.

The Coastal Commission can assist the Energy Commission and utilities in identifying suitable new sites in non-designated coastal areas. Also, when the Coastal Commission revises its designations every two years, as directed by the Act, it can base its revisions on the most recent forecast of the need for coastal sites in the Energy Commission's updated Biennial Report.

The areas recommended for designation contain specific coastal resources that would be damaged if a site of from 200 to 1,500 acres of the area were converted to power plant use. The resources include: public parks and proposed acquisitions for parks, recreation areas, wetlands, marine resources such as seabird rookeries, marine mammal resting areas and kelp beds, selected sensitive plant and wildlife habitat areas, cultivated prime agricultural lands in special agrarian communities, and special forested areas in the coastal zone. The boundaries of these resources are mapped on six sets of resource maps.

This report and the resource maps have been extensively reviewed in seven hearings before Regional Coastal Commissions, in two public workshops, and in meetings with representatives from the Energy Commission and other California State agencies, Federal agencies, environmental groups, the electric utilities, and other interested parties. A staff recommendation and the maps have been available for review since December 1977, and this report makes a number of revisions in response to the extensive Regional Commission and public comments.

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